United Nations E/2017/NGO/18

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 June 2017

Original: English

2017 session
28 July 2016-27 July 2017
Agenda item 5
High-level segment

Statement submitted by Rural Development Institute, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

17-09372 (E) 090617

Please recycle

Statement

Secure land rights are fundamental to the more than 750 million people who live on less than two dollars a day. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia the majority of employed women work in agriculture (60 and 70 percent, respectively). We appreciate the explicit inclusion of land rights, and particularly women's land rights, as a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Secure land rights for all are a critical component of the 2030 Agenda's goals and targets: the three land rights indicators (1.4.2, 5.a.1, and 5.a.2) are vital to ending poverty (goal 1), ensuring food security (goal 2), achieving gender equality and empowering women (goal 5), and making cities and human settlements inclusive (goal 11).

Indicator 1.4.2, in particular, focuses on the twin aims of tracking legal and administrative progress by governments in recognizing secure rights to land (documentation) and of people-defined progress on the quality of land rights (perceptions). In doing so, this indicator tracks the 2030 Agenda's land rights content developed through months of inclusive negotiation and consultation and satisfies the request in the United Nations Declaration that global indicators maintain the level of ambition of 2030 Agenda (Para. 75).

However, the challenges associated with generating and using data to track progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was echoed in the latest Report of the Workshop for 2017 Voluntary National Reviews at the High Level Political Forum. This report emphasizes the need for capacity development and complementary efforts to ensure adequate development and implementation of the agreed upon indicators.

To that end, we recommend to the United Nations agencies custodians of the land rights indicators [United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)], to the IAEG and Member States that as they work toward the recategorization of the land rights indicators from Tier III to Tier II, and eventually toward their implementation:

- They continuously engage global, regional, national and local level civil society actors and provide them with opportunities for meaningful involvement.
- They respect and uphold the letter and the spirit of the land rights indicators rather than narrowly reducing them to being limited to ownership (or ownership-like) rights to the detriment or exclusion of the millions of people who live in countries where the State owns all the land; who reside on communally-held land; or who are unable to afford to own land but require secure use rights.
- Instead of redefining the indicator to fit the available data, and in the process ignoring precisely the segments of the population the agenda seeks to reach, they acknowledge the data void and work to close it by expanding and improving the data gathering tools they currently have and by being open to new sources of data, such as an innovative global poll on property rights, that can help fill this void in a timely and cost-effective way.